

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~2~~79 in which the concentration of hydrofluoric acid is approximately 0.2%.
6. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~1~~79 in which the treatment is carried out for a period of at least 10 seconds.
7. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~6~~79 in which the treatment is carried out for a period of 10 seconds to 2 minutes.

Claims 8-9 (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended): A process of treating a metallic bone implant consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with an aqueous solution containing fluoride ions in a concentration of greater than 0% and up to 3%, said aqueous solution being free from sodium and sodium ions, ~~for a period of time and at a temperature selected according to the concentration of the solution without causing significant etching of the implant and being a solution of a~~ fluoride selected from the group consisting of lithium fluoride, cesium fluoride, potassium fluoride, ammonium fluoride, stannous fluoride, or any combination thereof.

Claims 11-15 (Previously withdrawn)

Claims 16-19 (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended)): A process as claimed in claim ~~1~~79 in which the surface of the metallic bone implant after the treatment with the hydrofluoric acid solution has essentially the same morphology as the surface of the implant before said treatment.

Claim 21-22 (Cancelled)

23. (Original): A process as claimed in claim 10 in which the surface of the metallic bone implant after the treatment with the aqueous solution containing fluoride ions has essentially the same morphology as the surface of the implant before said treatment.

Claims 24-26 (Cancelled)

27. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~1~~10, wherein said metallic bone implant has a surface layer constituted by a metallic oxide.

Claims 28-29 (Cancelled)

30. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~10~~79, wherein said metallic bone implant has a surface layer constituted by a metallic oxide.

Claims 31-33 (Cancelled)

34. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~27~~10, wherein said metallic bone implant is constituted by titanium or a titanium alloy, and said metallic oxide is a titanium oxide.

Claims 35-36 (Cancelled)

37. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~30~~79, wherein said metallic bone implant is constituted by titanium or a titanium alloy, and said metallic oxide is a titanium oxide.

Claims 38-43 (Cancelled)

44. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim 10, comprising a further step, performed after said treatment with the ~~hydrofluoric acid~~ aqueous solution containing fluoride ions, wherein the implant is treated with a solution comprising calcium ions.

Claims 45-50 (Cancelled)

51. (Currently amended): A process as claimed in claim ~~37~~79, comprising a further step, performed after said treatment with the ~~hydrofluoric acid~~ aqueous solution containing fluoride ions, wherein the implant is treated with a solution comprising calcium ions.

Claims 52-78 (Cancelled)

79. (Currently amended) A process of treating a metallic bone implant consisting essentially of treating the metallic bone implant with a solution of hydrofluoric acid in which the concentration of hydrofluoric acid is ~~between 0.01% and to~~ 0.5%.
80. (Previously added) The process of claim 79 wherein the concentration of hydrofluoric acid is between 0.1% and 0.5%.
81. (Previously added) The process of claim 79 wherein the concentration of hydrofluoric acid is between 0.2% and 0.5%.